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ABSTRACT

Community recreation services provide enjoyable, interesting and challenging opportunities that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of participants, enrich community life, and provide life skills training for youth. Leisure skills and interests gained in adolescence contribute significantly to the development of human competence and the achievement of self-actualization. Successful recreation programs operate under the philosophy that youth are a resource to be developed, rather than a problem to be managed; therefore, constructive use of leisure must become an integral part of the school curriculum at all levels. This paper presents an overview of community recreation services for youth, examines current issues in community recreation services for young adolescents with a particular focus on at-risk youth, discusses the value of participation in organized sports, and provides an overview of programming for youth. Innovative and exemplary programs that serve the needs of youth are highlighted. The paper also includes an examination of funding strategies for leisure services, analyzes trends and issues in recreation and leisure services, and sets forth challenges for public policy makers. (Contains approximately 100 references.) (LL)

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OVERVIEW OF YOUTH RECREATION PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

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September 1991

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of community recreation services is to provide enjoyable, interesting and challenging recreation opportunities that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of participants and enrich community life. Public recreation agencies continue to offer more and increasingly diverse recreational programming. Participation in community recreation programs will continue to increase at the local level.

A network of community agencies that work cooperatively to provide services is more effective than the community recreation agency functioning alone. A major challenge to recreation agencies in the coming years will be to initiate collaboration and to expand their roles as facilitators and coordinators of all organizations in the community that provide recreation services. Potential partner organizations include the local school district, youth serving agencies, foundations, adult service organizations, religious organizations and churches, and colleges and universities.

All projections indicate that the current cutbacks in funding at the local government level for public services are long term reductions. Recreation must be perceived as an essential community service and recreation managers must aggressively seek to obtain a fair share of the ever diminishing general fund for recreation services. A broad scope of alternative sources of monies must also be tapped as creative funding strategies become essential.

In the future municipal budget shortfalls will make it increasingly necessary for recreation agencies to depend more heavily on user fees and charges to finance services. Agencies will be forced to develop programming that is self-supporting, or nearly self-supporting. Local governments must subsidize services to those who are economically disadvantaged and unable to afford to pay for services in order to make certain that they are not excluded from participation.

Standards for community recreation services must be developed to assure that there is equity in the distribution of facilities and the delivery of services within communities and between cities across the country.

Education for the constructive use of leisure must become an integral part of the school curriculum at all levels. Leisure awareness must also become a part of all organized recreation programming. Participation in recreation activities develops life-long leisure skills and interests; and provides youth with the personal resources to continue to enhance their quality of life for a lifetime. Recreation services are important in that they are often the services that attract youth to a community center or multi-service center, establish initial contact with the youth and provide opportunities to deliver other social services that may be of benefit to the youth. Successful programs operate under the philosophy that youth are a resource to be developed, rather than a problem to be managed.

The provision of community recreation services is a good investment. Participation in organized recreation provides for

the constructive use of free time and develops skills for the management of discretionary time and thereby reduce the need for, and the costs of, providing other governmental and social services that deal with the management of anti-social behaviors after they occur.

High quality child/youth care services that are accessible and affordable must be available in every community. Organized recreation must be a part of the program.

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OVERVIEW OF YOUTH RECREATION PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

I. INTRODUCTION

> "Life Skills training is conceptualized as the formal teaching of requisite skills for surviving, living with others and succeeding in a complex society. . . . Contemporary adolescents need help in acquiring a range of social competencies to cope with academics, to meet fundamental challenges of forming stable human relationships, to maintain hope about their future, to understand and adopt health promoting behaviors, to make wise decisions about life options, and to optimize use of social networks. Adolescents need general problem solving skills, planning and decision making skills, cognitive strategies for resisting peer and media influences, skills and increasing self-monitoring and self regulation, coping strategies to deal with everyday stresses." (Hamburg, 1990, p. 3)

Community recreation programs provide life skills training for youth (OTA, 1991). Recreation experiences contribute significantly to the development of human competence and the achievement of self-actualization. The purpose of community recreation services is to provide experiences that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of participants and enrich community life through leisure activities that are fun, interesting and challenging to the participants. Through recreation experiences physical well-being, mental health, social relationships, sense of community and unique capabilities are realized and enhanced. The youth who experiences a wide range of leisure activities that become habits will carry those skills and interests into adulthood and will become an advocate for a

personally fulfilling life-style and will possess the personal resources to enhance their quality of life for a lifetime.

The results of a 1990 Roper Poll revealed that for the first time a majority of Americans felt that their leisure is more important than their work. US News and World Report indicated that in 1990, Americans spent in excess of $400 billion in the leisure market. Approximately one dollar in every eight that is spent by American consumers is related to leisure and recreation. Leisure will continue to play an increasingly important role in improving quality of life. When today's youth reach adulthood they will spend as much time in leisure as they will at work. Leisure skills and interests gained in adolescence will be critical to self-actualization and happiness.

The discussion that follows provides an overview of community recreation services for youth. The purpose of the paper is to examine current issues in community recreation services for young adolescents with a particular focus on at-risk youth. The paper presents a discussion of the values of participation in organized recreation programs. It also provides an overview of programming for youth. Innovative and exemplary programs that serve the needs of youth are highlighted. The paper also includes an examination of funding strategies for leisure services. Trends and issues in recreation and leisure services are analyzed. Finally, the paper sets forth challenges for public policy makers.

II. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The recreation movement in the United States was, in its inception, a humanitarian response to urbanization. The industrialization of America brought about a significant population shift from rural to urban areas. The result was congestion and a multiplicity of accompanying social problems. The first recreation programs were organized in the late 1800's in response to a concern for the well-being of children living in the major cities who were left unsupervised for long hours while their parents worked in the factories. Organized recreation programs were developed to provide children and youth with safe places to play and to offer an alternative to involvement in delinquent behaviors.

The concept of organized play programs as a social service originated with private settlement houses. Social reformer were among the first to embrace the idea that play was acceptable and worthwhile for children and youth. The Boston Sand Garden was organized in 1885 and was the first community recreation program in the country. Initially, playlots were located on private land and were staffed by volunteers. Public funding and land were allocated to the programs by 1889. The sites were located in the poorest working-class neighborhoods of Boston. The concept was accepted immediately and by 1890 public recreation programs, similar to those in Boston, were initiated in ten major industrial cities including Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Chicago, and Milwaukee. The City of Los Angeles established and

operated the first community-wide system of recreation services in 1904. The Los Angeles program served as a model for similar systems in cities across the country. As community recreation programs expanded, the focus of services shifted from inner-city youth to serving middle-class Americans of all ages.

As early as 1910, pioneers in the recreation movement recognized that school facilities were potential resources for additional community uses, including recreation. Educators and recreators began advocating for enlarging school building sites to accommodate playgrounds. Park playgrounds and play fields were developed on properties that were located adjacent to school sites in order to facilitate shared use of the park areas.

The importance of education for leisure was first formally recognized in 1918 by the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education. Among the Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education adopted by the Commission (1918) was the "Worthy Use of Leisure." During the 1920's, progressive educators began to advocate for education about the worthy use of leisure; however, the idea was never fully integrated into the school curriculum.

Community recreation services were initiated in many cities during the World War I era. When the United States entered the war, communities that were located near military camps were expected to provide recreation services for military personnel. As a result, millions of Americans had access to organized recreation for the first time and gained an appreciation for its values. Many of them became advocates for the implementation of

similar programs in their home towns after the war.

The establishment of the Bureau of Colored Work in 1919 within the Playground and Recreation Association of America, the then national professional association, focused the attention of recreation professionals on the needs of Blacks. Despite these efforts to reach all citizens, few advances were actually achieved in the Black community. Through the first half of this century community recreation programs were segregated by race. Southern cities with significant Black populations established Colored divisions within the parks and recreation department and provided separate programs.

The post World War I years were marked by increased prosperity and increased discretionary time. By 1925 the forty-hour work week became a reality in America. More than twenty states passed legislation giving cities the legal authority to provide park and recreation services. As a result, there was phenomenal growth in the number of communities providing recreation services. Local government spending for community recreation services also increased.

Public recreation services continued to make significant gains in the 1930's. During the Depression, federal public works and social programs provided for the construction and improvement of park and recreation facilities in communities across the country. The additional facilities resulted in an increased demand for recreation staff to provide supervision and programming. The Federal Government responded and provided the most intensive training program ever attempted for recreation

workers to fill the newly-created staffing needs. During the Depression years the work week was shortened to spread the available work among more people. A large portion of the population had increased discretionary time for participation in recreation programs. People could not afford to pay admission fees and commercial recreation programs closed for a lack of business. The public instead participated in community recreation and programming was expanded with financial assistance from the federal government.

The concept of community schools originated in Flint, Michigan in 1935 when the Mott Foundation sponsored a summer recreation program at a school site. The project was initiated to provide youth with structured activities during non-school hours to keep them out of trouble. The project introduced the practice of using public schools during non-traditional times; after school, in the evenings, and during the summer. The concept was expanded to include the idea that schools could also provide recreation and enrichment activities for adults. The community school concept spread to other communities in Michigan between 1940 and 1960. In the 1960's, the Mott Foundation began an outreach effort to advance community schools awareness and development in all fifty states by establishing community education centers in universities and state departments of education.

Community recreation programs were curtailed during World War II. There was a shortage of workers to staff programs, travel was restricted, and people worked long hours and therefore had less discretionary time for leisure activities. However,

programs experienced unprecedented growth following World War II. Many military personnel received training in recreation services during the war and were ready to fill professional positions when they returned to civilian life. Men and women who had participated in recreation programs while in service returned home with a new sense of appreciation for the benefits of recreation and were strong supporters of new and expanded public recreation services in their own communities. Tax support for local recreation services increased. Communities were particularly supportive of expanded programming for youth in response to an increase in juvenile delinquency. Youth centers and teen canteen programs became popular.

The Civil Rights movement in the 1960's prompted a new and sustained effort to provide recreational programming in low-income, minority neighborhoods. A number of riots occurred including the violent upheavals in the Watts section of Los Angeles, Newark, Washington, D.C., and Detroit. Among the demands that were presented by inner-city residents was the call for more and better recreation facilities and programs. Cities responded by providing mobile recreation equipment. Activities were transported by truck or bus to neighborhoods that lacked facilities or programming. The mobile units enabled many cities to deliver recreation activities in all neighborhoods and to address the deficiencies very quickly. On the other hand, Cleveland and other cities reacted to the uprisings by discontinuing recreation services and employing additional police and fire protection.

In the 1960's, the federal government substantially increased its involvement in urban affairs and provided billions of dollars for local programs. The Job Corps and other community action programs, under the provisions of the Economic Opportunities Act, provided job training for youth and enabled public recreation agencies to increase their staffing levels and provide more services at a minimal cost to the local government. The Department of Housing and Urban Development was established to coordinate and administer national urban programs. The Model Cities and Community Action programs were created to address the needs of disadvantaged urban residents and to improve the living conditions in inner-city areas. Urban renewal programs were expanded to improve conditions in deteriorated inner-city areas. The Open Space Land Program provided funding for urban park and recreation facilities. Community recreation agencies also benefited from federal dollars through General Revenue Sharing, Community Development Block Grants, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act and the Housing and Community Development Act. The programs provided communities with the supplemental funding that was needed to serve inner-city neighborhoods. The federal programs introduced uniformity in service standards across the country. By the late 1960's, with the threat of racial violence having subsided, most federal assistance programs and special agencies serving inner-city minorities disappeared.

The National Recreation and Park Association established the Urban Affairs Department within the organization in 1967. The Department resulted in an increased recognition of the needs

of urban disadvantaged youth among recreation professionals.

The decade from 1967 to 1977 was a high growth period for local park and recreation budgets. Although appropriations for recreation resources and services increased substantially at every level of government in the 1970's, the increases could not keep pace with the rate of inflation in the costs of land, construction, energy, and staffing. The energy crisis during the 1970's restricted travel and encouraged people to participate in community recreation activities that were offered close to home in record numbers and placed even greater demands on public programs that were already beginning to experience cutbacks resulting from the financial crisis that affected municipalities across the country. By the late 1970's, high inflation forced budget reductions and austerity programs. Financing services was perhaps the most challenging problem facing communities during the 1980's. The tax revolt, initiated by Proposition 2 1/2 in Massachusetts and Proposition 13 in California, had significant impact on recreation services. These referenda resulted in drastic reductions in services or elimination of recreation as a public service in some communities in these states. Agencies were forced to develop new approaches to financing services. While most cities in other areas of the country had monies for capital investments, funding for the operation and maintenance of facilities and programs was not available. Many communities delayed the construction of new facilities, realizing that although capital investment monies were available, operating budgets would not allow for staffing, programming and maintenance

of the facilities when they were completed. Operating costs increased so significantly that community recreation budgets could no longer sustain services at previous levels and the recreation needs in many neighborhoods went unaddressed.

Programming for children and youth was an issue in the 1980's. The number of families with both parents working and the number of single working parent families increased significantly. Community recreation agencies across the country responded to the need for child care and began to provide before- and after-school, as well as holiday and summer day camp programming for children and youth.

Local government budget shortfalls in the 1980's and 1990's have brought about significant reductions in recreation services. The fiscal crisis has resulted in reduced staffing, decreased hours of operation of facilities, and the elimination of some programs that are not self-supporting or funded by outside dollars.

III. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION SERVICES FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Organization of Community Recreation Services

Community recreation agencies provide a full range of leisure opportunities and services that enrich community life. Community recreation is most frequently a service of the municipal government; however, services may also be delivered by a county agency, an unincorporated community, a special taxing district, or another geographic area with a definable population. Recreation services are generally provided by a combined recreation and park department with the functions of both services merged as a single unit of the local government entity.

Community recreation services are provided in nearly every city, town and village across the country. Programming is also offered in many rural areas. National statistics on the number of individuals participating in community recreation programs or participation in youth programs are not available. Data on the total dollars spent nationally to provide community recreation services or expendatures for youth recreation services are not available either.

Recreation services are financed primarily by taxes. Additional sources of funding include gifts, grants, trust funds, and fees and charges for services. Facilities and programs are open to all residents of the local government jurisdiction regardless of their age, sex, ethnicity, social or economic status.

Recreation agencies operate a variety of facilities including community centers, parks, pools and aquatic facilities, athletic fields, golf courses, playgrounds, play fields, winter sports facilities, outdoor nature centers, stadiums, camps, beaches, and zoos. Agencies also provide leadership for a diverse program of sports and games, arts and crafts, dance, drama, music, social recreation, outdoor recreation, special events, and other activities.

Community recreation agencies are managed by professional staff, with the assistance of a large number of volunteers, and normally operate under the direction of a citizen board or commission. The board or commission may be elected or appointed and may have policy-setting or advisory functions. A policy board has the authority to set policy, to employ staff, to allocate monies, and has primary responsibility for the provision of recreation services to the community. An advisory board provides advice and counsel to the professional staff and to the city council, city commission, or a similar governing board concerning policy and long-range planning for recreation services.

Support for Services

The federal and state governments provide a broad scope of services that support local recreation agencies. Professional associations also assist community agencies in the delivery of recreation services.

More than 80 federal agencies, commissions, committees and

councils are involved with approximately 300 recreation programs serving local agencies including park land management, master planning, technical assistance, financial assistance, research, and coordination of regional and state programs.

Federal funding assistance is provided through several programs. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides matching grants to states and municipalities for the acquisition and development of open space and outdoor recreation projects. A large portion of the LWCF funding is allocated to communities for urban park rehabilitation. Community Development Block Grants provide monies to cities for a wide range of local projects including park land acquisition and development, construction and renovation of facilities, and programming.

Additionally, the federal government provides research assistance. A number of federal agencies either directly sponsor research or provide funding for other organizations to conduct research on a contractual basis. Financial support is given almost exclusively to rural recreation research.

Legal authority for the operation of public recreation programs is granted to local governments by the states. Federal monies are distributed through state agencies for the acquisition and development of open space. States provide consultation services for master planning for park and recreation services and offer technical assistance in the delivery of specialized programming. In nearly every state at least one public university offers a curriculum in parks and recreation to prepare professionals in the field. Colleges and universities serve as a

resource for student interns and staff. Universities also sponsor a great deal of research and provide technical assistance and guidance for field research to assist local agencies in solving problems.

Professional associations provide a broad scope of services to community recreation agencies. Associations are organized at the international, national, district/regional and state levels. They seek to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and values of recreation and leisure services in the community. Associations monitor legislation and act to educate elected officials about issues in parks, recreation and leisure at the federal, state and local levels. Professional associations serve as clearinghouses for the dissemination of professional information. They provide forums for discussion of issues in the field. They also produce and distribute publications, journals and other informational materials. Associations encourage and facilitate research and disseminate the findings to interested and concerned publics through conferences, symposiums and publications. They provide technical assistance and professional consulting services to local agencies in a wide array of functions including recreation programming, evaluation, and master planning. Associations establish and endorse facility and service standards. A broad spectrum of continuing education programs for professional staff and volunteers are sponsored by associations including conventions, conferences, institutes, and other meetings. Accreditation of university curricula in parks and recreation is a jointly

sponsored project of the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Association for Leisure and Recreation. Professional associations also support the development and recognition of leaders in the field. National associations coordinate and support the activities of their district, state and local affiliate organizations.

The American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATES (RTA) and the Academy of Leisure Sciences address the needs of the profession from a national perspective.

> AALR seeks to promote the organization of community, school, and national programs of leisure services and recreation education. The association's 5,600 members include practitioners and educators who are committed to improving leisure lifestyles and recreation opportunities for all individuals. AALR serves as a forum for leisure professionals and other groups to exchange leisure information, ideas, and concepts. The Association encourages the formulation, analysis, and dissemination of new leisure knowledge, trends, and methods of leisure services delivery as well as the integration of concepts of positive leisure attitudes and values into educational systems. AALR is an association of a 35,000 member Alliance of professionals in the fields of health, physical education, recreation, and dance.

NRPA seeks to unite park and recreation practitioners and citizen advocates into a force for health and wellness. The 21,000 members are dedicated to building the finest park and recreation system for the health and welfare of people. NRPA seeks to advance research and scientific knowledge, to ease community tensions, prevent and cure urban and rural deterioration, and ameliorate social ills by the enrichment of individual lives through recreation, parks and leisure.

RTA is a professional organization consisting of 40 distinguished Black recreation, park and conservation practitioners, academicians, and lay persons who have substantially contributed to the growth and development of recreation, parks, and conservation for Black and other ethnic-minority Americans. RTA sponsors an independent annual forum in which to conduct substantive examination of park, recreation and related leisure services issues, particularly as they affect quality of life for Blacks and other minorities, and seeks to perpetuate scholarly effort and to identify needs and accomplishments of Blacks in the recreation, park and conservation movement.

The Academy of Leisure Sciences is interdisciplinary with membership representation from the fields of Business, Education, Humanities, Sciences, Social Science and Recreation and Parks. Members of the Academy come together

for the purpose of promoting and advancing the understanding of leisure through discussion, debate and exchange of ideas. The Academy carries out this purpose through an annual forum and the reporting and publishing of research and scholarly papers devoted to exploration and critical analysis of leisure in a changing society. Additionally, the Academy recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of leisure. The Academy includes a membership of 110 professionals.

AALR works with six district associations and 54 state/territory affiliate organizations. NRPA works with 50 state associations. A broad spectrum of associations serve specializations within the recreation profession including outdoor recreation, therapeutic recreation, youth sports and family recreation.

The World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA) and the International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ICHPER) serve the profession internationally.

The WLRA is a nonprofit, non-governmental international service agency dedicated to improving individual and community life through recreation and leisure. WLRA has consultative status with the United Nations and performs services globally through cooperation with other international associations, specialized agencies of the U.N., affiliated national associations and national organizations. The WLRA has a membership of 1,000 professionals.

ICHPER is dedicated to the pursuit and sharing of educational knowledge among all nations of the world. Through individual members, national organizations and institutional members, research and development are produced, integrated and policies disseminated worldwide. ICHPER has dedicated efforts toward developing countries in order to initiate and strengthen educational programs. Through its 550 members, ICHPER has given visibility and status to the profession and strengthened it globally.

Defining Leisure and Recreation

Conceptulizations and definitions of the terms "leisure" and "recreation" are varied with little uniformity or consensus among those in the profession. The disagreement has resulted in confusion both within and outside the field. While some scholars have perceived the terms as interchangeable or as having meanings that are very similar, others have defined them as opposites with distinct and different meanings.

Leisure is defined from one of three general perspectives: as time, as activity, or as experience.

Leisure as time. "Leisure is time beyond that which is required for existence, the things which we do, biologically to stay alive . . . and subsistence, the things that we must do to make a living. . . . It is discretionary time, the time to be used according to our own judgement or choice." (Brightbill, 1960, p. 4)

Leisure as Activity. "Leisure is activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction." (Kelly, 1982, p. 7) "Leisure is activity--apart from the obligations of work, family, and society--to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, for the free exercise of creative capacity." (Dumazedier, 1987, p. 16-17)

Leisure as Experience. "Leisure is a . . . state of mind, the orientation, the attitudes, the conditions, the experience, or the definition of the leisure actor. Leisure is not in the time, or in the action, but in the actor. To leisure is to feel good without analyzing why." (Kelly, 1982, p. 11)

Scholars have defined recreation in many different ways. Recreation implies re-creation of energy or restoration of the wholeness of mind, spirit, and body. When leisure is defined as free time, then recreation generally refers to the organized activity that is carried out in the free time (Butler, 1976, p. 8; Kelly, 1987; Neumeyer & Neumeyer, 1958, p. 22). Gray and Greben (1974) define recreation as ". . . an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of well-being and self-satisfaction. It is characterized by feelings of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, success, personal worth and pleasure. It reinforces a positive self-image. Recreation is a response to aesthetic experience, achievement of personal goals or positive feedback from others. It is independent of activity, leisure or personal acceptance."

(p. 49) Although definitions of recreation vary, the concepts of activity, leisure, satisfaction and pleasure are common to most.

IV. THE ROLE OF RECREATION IN THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Values of Participation

Increasingly, recreation professionals are being asked to demonstrate the values of the services they provide and to justify the relevance of their services to the individual and the community. Although understanding the cluster of human experiences labeled "recreation" is central to the provision of recreation services and to the recreation movement, few resources have been expended on research. Very little is known about recreation experiences.

The purpose of community recreation services is to provide enjoyable, interesting and challenging recreation opportunities that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of participants and enrich community life. Recreation is recognized as a fundamental human need. The ultimate basis for providing public recreation is the duel conviction that "all human beings are worthy of respect, and must be given the fullest possible opportunity for achieving their maximum potential in life; and recreation and leisure provide an important means of enriching personality and promoting personal growth, constructive personal relationships and positive participation in community life." (Kraus, 1977, p. 43) Shivers (1987) addressed the values of recreation and indicated that "Its contributions to the furtherance of human life justifies its inclusion among the functions of government." (p. 82)

Recreation is unique in that the tests are self-generated, the evaluations are self-administered, and the rewards are self-determined. Recreation and leisure service programs contribute greatly to the development of human competence and achievement of a full, happy life. Through leisure experiences the individual's physical well-being and mental health are realized and enhanced. Recreation encourages self-discovery, self-actualization and the development of one's unique potentials. Recreation provides opportunities to experience success, to establish positive, meaningful relationships with others, to experience a sense of belonging, and to develop self-esteem, self-identity, and self-worth. Participation can provide for the development of leadership skills. The outcomes of participation include a sense of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, pleasure, anticipation, and relaxation. Participation in recreation improves the quality of life, develops life-long leisure skills and interests, and provides youth with the personal resources to continue to enhance their quality of life for a lifetime.

Recreation provides youth with opportunities to make their own decisions, learn time management, develop self-initiative, gain experience in self-government and contribute to the community. Through participation in recreational activities young people can acquire skills in conflict resolution without use of violence, learn fair play and gain respect for the rights of others. Recreation offers non-academic learning experiences that are complementary of experiences in the classroom and can be

particularly important for youth who do not achieve well in a highly structured learning environment.

A 1991 Office of Technology Assessment Report on Adolescent Health cited the values of participation in organized recreation programs including: appropriate use of discretionary time; potential for adult guidance; possible reduction of subjective distress; opportunities for learning life skills and social competence; opportunities to work; and possible reduction in substance abuse, especially among disadvantaged youth.

A number of studies have investigated why people participate in leisure activities. Havighurst (1961) concluded that different age, sex and social class groups can derive similar values from different leisure activities. The researcher reported the reasons given for participation in a person's favorite activity as (in order of frequency of responses) (a) just for the pleasure of doing it, (b) as a welcome change from work, (c) encouraging contact with friends, (d) gaining new experiences, (e) making the time pass, and (f) providing a feeling of creativeness. Part of the appeal of recreational activity is similar to that of play in that the individual cannot explain why the activity is enjoyable. Huzinga stated that "The element of 'fun' can't be broken down into subcategories. Something is either fun or it isn't. Leisure activity ultimately resists rational analysis."

Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) studied the values of participation in recreation activities as perceived by youth. The findings indicated that youth identified challenge, focused

concentration, and self-determination as important characteristics of participation. Youth indicated that they liked the organized activity and the predictability of the situation, the social aspects of being a part of a team or group, and the recognition that they received for participation.

A number of studies have investigated the values of participation in organized after-school recreation programs. After-school programs are offered by community recreation agencies across the country. Typical programs include before school, after school, holiday, and summer day camp programs.

Long and Long (1989) studied junior and senior high school students and reported that the use of time and life-style were significantly different for unsupervised youth as compared with youth who were supervised. The more removed youth were from adult care, the more susceptible they were to peer pressure and to committing anti-social behaviors. Further, the researchers reported that as supervision declined, the psychological risks for youth increased. Specific areas of concern included teen violence, depression, pregnancy, and lower academic achievement. Unattended youth were three times more likely to be responsible for the care of a younger sibling than youth who were supervised. The use of youth for sibling care was found to deteriorate sibling relationships. Unsupervised youth spent significantly more time on the telephone and made obscene calls more frequently than supervised youth. The researchers found that 62% of supervised youth did their homework on a regular basis compared with only 48% of the unattended youth. Five

percent of the unsupervised youth reported that they never did homework assignments, while none of the supervised youth reported never doing assignments. Friendship patterns were also found to be significantly different among youth. Supervised youth invited friends to their homes. Self-care youth did not. Unsupervised youth were also frequently left at home alone when they were ill and when they were on school holidays.

The findings of a study of youth ages 10 to 15 in Madison, Wisconsin indicated that youth who did not participate in organized after-school activities were more susceptible to peer pressure and were more likely to engage in undesirable behaviors than youth who had access to organized activities. Bundy and Boser (1987) also found that youth who were left alone for two or more hours a day experienced a high level of worry, depression, fear, loneliness and boredom. Unsupervised youth had a diminished level of performance at school. Further findings indicated that the parent-child communications were impaired by self-care.

Peterson and Magrab (1989) found that elementary-school-aged children who were left alone after school were more likely to be anxious, perceived themselves as having poor social abilities and experienced behavioral problems. Among older children, the researchers found that self-care may result in greater susceptibility to peer pressure and subsequent anti-social behavior. Youth in grades five through nine who described themselves as "hanging out in the neighborhood" were at the greatest risk of involvement in anti-social behaviors.

A 1990 Children's Defense Fund report indicated that youth who do not have access to organized after-school activities are more susceptible to peer pressure and to engaging in undesirable behaviors than youth who do participate in organized after-school activities. Adolescents who are engaged in structured, meaningful activities during their non-school hours and are offered adequate opportunities for adult contact, informal learning, and the development of personal social skills will avoid, or at least postpone, involvement in dangerous and anti-social activities. Further, participation in after-school (extracurricular) activities during adolescence is the best indicator of success in college (Calloway, 1991).

Steinberg (1986) studied susceptibility to peer pressure among adolescents in grades five through nine in Madison, Wisconsin. The study findings indicated that adolescents who were responsible for self-care, but had to contact a parent or adult and report home after school, were no more susceptible to peer pressure than were adolescents who were supervised by their parents at home during after-school hours. The study demonstrated that there were differences within the self-care population. Adolescents who were more removed from adult supervision were more susceptible to pressure from their friends to engage in anti-social activity.

Richardson, et al. (1989) examined the relationship between self-care and substance abuse among eighth-grade children in the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas. The results of the

study showed that self-care is an important risk factor for substance abuse. Eighth-grade students who cared for themselves for 11 or more hours a week were found to be at twice the risk of substance abuse as those who did not take care of themselves at all.

One quarter of the eighth-graders surveyed for the National Education Longitudinal Study in 1988 reported spending two or more hours alone each day after school. An ongoing survey of sixth- through twelfth-graders in predominantly middle-sized communities found that, on an average school day, five of 10 sixth-graders and almost six of ten junior and senior high students spend two or more hours at home without adult supervision. The results of a 1987 survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates indicated that a majority of the more than 1,000 teachers surveyed cited isolation and lack of after-school supervision as a major factor contributing to children's difficulty in school. Thirty-seven percent of the principals who responded to a 1988 survey sponsored by the National Association for Elementary School Principals felt that children would perform better in school if they were not left unsupervised for long periods of time outside of school.

Physical safety is a concern for children who are left alone. Unintentional injury is the nation's leading cause of death among children. Dersewitz and Williamson (1987) found that the rate of injuries increased as the level of supervision decreased. Asked what supports they thought would be helpful when youths could not be with parents after school, the most

frequent responses given by third- through ninth-graders were "safe places to go if you are afraid," "planned activities in the school building," "after-school programs in the neighborhood," and "ideas about how to take care of yourself after school." One third of the students surveyed indicated that the community should offer more low-cost activities for youth and ensure safety at places where teens congregate.

Although the research cannot document that participation in organized recreation programs, in isolation, prevents juvenile delinquency, it is generally accepted that recreation is a primary element of prevention. While recreation alone is not the only medium of intervention, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that participation in recreational activities can play an important role in the prevention of marginally deviant behavior. The main contribution that recreation can make is in the area of motivating youth to become involved in activities other than those that are defined as deviant (Westland, 1985).

Participation in organized recreation develops skills for the management of discretionary time, which is fundamental to the prevention of delinquency. The Michigan Department of Public Health recently conducted a study of juvenile delinquency in metropolitan Detroit and reported that many negative activities not only occur during leisure time, but actually serve as a form of recreation. The anti-social activities satisfy the adolescent's need to seek thrill, excitement, glamour and high-risk adventure. Participation in recreational activities that demand strenuous physical involvement or are emotionally

exhausting provide satisfaction of these same needs (Godbey, 1990).

A number of studies have investigated recreation participation among older adolescents. Kelly and Raymond (1990) studied leisure and life satisfaction of unemployed minority youth, ages 16 to 25, living in inner-city Chicago. The findings indicated that youth felt their leisure activities helped them stay healthy, relieved stress, provided opportunities for social recognition and gave them feelings of accomplishment. Males indicated that leisure activities helped them meet new friends. The youth also reported that they experienced heightened feelings of competence, belonging, and self-worth as a result of involvement in leisure activities.

Kelly and Raymond (1990) studied the leisure activity patterns of Black and Hispanic youth, ages 16 to 25, who were unemployed and living in inner-city Chicago. The research was commissioned by the Chicago Park District. The results indicated that social activities at home, such as talking with friends, watching television, and playing with children were the most common recreation activities among those surveyed. Sports were identified as the second most frequent activity among males. Hispanics were more likely than whites or Blacks to engage in hobbies, swimming, team sports, and to attend community sports events. Respondents indicated that there was a need to improve the recreation facilities in the community and to offer programs for learning work-related skills. The findings also revealed a need to more effectively distribute information about

programming, particularly to those who were not already participating in programs or attending recreation facilities.

Hutchison (1987) conducted a study of the leisure activity patterns of white, Black, and Hispanic youth living in Chicago. The investigation revealed significant differences in the type of activities and in the age, sex, size, and social composition of the recreation groups using the park areas. Parks in Hispanic neighborhoods had the highest rate of use and were used most frequently for family activities and by mixed groups. The park itself was found to be an integral part of the Hispanic population's leisure activity. Parks in white and Black neighborhoods experienced much less intense use. Activities were largely individual, mobile activities (jogging, bicycling). There were few differences in park use by whites and Blacks.

Leisure Awareness

Free, uncommitted time is only a potential resource. It may be an asset or a liability. It is the individual's choice to use it constructively. The challenge to recreation professionals is to prepare each individual to assumes responsibility to use discretionary free time to improve their own quality of life and contribute to the community.

Leisure awareness, known as leisure education prior to the late 1980's, is the process of learning to make good decisions about the use of free time. Mundy & Odem (1979) define leisure (awareness) education as " . . . a total process through which individuals develop an understanding of self, leisure, and the

relationship of leisure to their own life-styles and the fabric of society. The ultimate outcome of leisure education is to enable individuals to enhance the quality of their lives in leisure." (p. 2-3) Leisure awareness is a life-long educational process. The product of leisure awareness is the possession of those qualities enabling an individual to compare options, select among the alternatives, acquire the necessary resources, demonstrate the physical capacity to act, and then plan leisure experiences as regular activities in their daily lives. The youth who has experienced a wide range of activities that become habits and hobbies will become an advocate of a personally fulfilling life-style and will embrace leisure as an asset and as an opportunity to enhance the quality of life and living.

Leisure awareness is a responsibility of both the community recreation program and the schools. The primary means through which leisure awareness has been attained is by introducing people to a broad scope of activities, providing skill instruction and providing recreation programming for participation during leisure time.

V. FINANCING ISSUES

Community recreation services are financed primarily through an appropriation from the general fund of the municipal or county government. General fund monies are obtained from local property taxes levied on the taxable property of the taxing district. Several other taxes may also fund recreation services. The special tax levy is a tax earmarked for parks and recreation and is spent only for a specified project. A special tax levy alleviates pressure on the general fund and eliminates competition with other government services for funding specific projects. Special assessment taxes may be levied on a specific area of a community to finance a park and recreation project that will exclusively benefit the residents of a defined neighborhood.

Other common sources of revenues include; (a) fees and charges for participation and use of equipment and facilities, (b) earnings on investments, (c) rental and lease agreements, (d) special use permits, (e) equipment sales, (f) concessions sales, (g) government agency and private foundation grants, (h) corporate sponsorships and (i) gifts.

Bonds are used to finance capital improvements. General obligation bonding is the most common such mechanism used for recreation services. A second type of bond is a revenue or enterprise bond. A revenue bond is appropriate for financing a revenue producing facility. Revenues to repay the bond must come solely from the revenues generated by the enterprise facility.

Turco & Betting (1991) reported that the findings of a 1989 survey of park and recreation department managers in cities with populations of 100,000 or more indicated that the most common sources of revenues were general fund appropriations (98%), user fees and charges (87%), facility rental proceeds (79%), and government grants (63%). General fund appropriations contributed the largest portion of the total department revenues (71.5%). User fees and charges (13.3%), special taxation (4.6%), and government grants (3.1%) were the other revenue sources that contributed a substantial portion of the total income. Additionally, 82% of the park and recreation departments indicated that they relied on contracting for services, 30% received monies from citizen advocacy groups or foundations, 53% received corporate sponsorship monies of $10,000 per year or more, 40% used gift catalogues and 30% received monies from special taxes.

Lottery monies are a mechanism that is used by a number of states to fund park and recreation services (Virdon, 1991). The Arizona Heritage Fund was a voter-led initiative, passed in 1990, that provides $20 million annually for park and recreation services in the state. Under the program, unclaimed monies from the Arizona State Lottery are transferred into the Arizona State Park Board and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. The largest share, some $3.5 million, is directed into state-wide grant programs which are designed to provide support for regional and local park and recreation services. The State of Colorado also utilizes lottery monies to fund local park and recreation services.

In the late 1970's, alternative funding strategies became essential. California's Proposition 13 was the first severe cut in public funding. Sixty-six percent of the cities in California eliminated recreation as a municipal service. By 1979, 53% of the cities across the country were facing budget freezes or significant budget reductions. Financing recreation services continues to be an issue for community agencies. The results of a 1990 survey of 4,800 cities with populations between 10,000 and 250,000 residents indicated that local park and recreation departments are currently experiencing budget reductions (McCormick, 1991). Local government officials estimated that their fiscal needs will exceed the available resources for at least the next five years. They indicated that only half the amount of funding needed may actually be available.

The financial shortfall is the result of several factors. The cost of doing business continues to increase. The public continues to demand more and increasingly diverse recreational programming, and these expanded services result in increased costs. Fewer grant monies are available today than in previous years to supplement local tax dollars. Less corporate assistance is available as a result of the current recession. Municipal governments are operating on reduced budgets and fewer dollars are available for allocation to recreation services as increasing amounts are allocated to providing those services that have traditionally been considered to be essential city services, such as fire and police protection.

A recent example of budget reductions was a midyear FY

1990-91 cut of nearly half a million dollars for youth recreation services in Fairfax County, Virginia. Cuts included reducing the number of summer youth centers from 23 sites to 17 sites, closing recreation centers on weekends during the summer months, elimination of funding for youth sports officiating costs and the elimination of a youth counselor in the youth services division.

The erosion of tax support for recreation services has resulted in the need to pursue alternative funding strategies. The City of San Jose, California has identified an aggressive plan for financing park and recreation services into the year 2000. The city plans to implement: (a) new property taxes, (b) land leasing for parks, (c) park land dedication requirements in new residential developments, (d) issuance of new bonds, (e) privatization of services, (f) expansion of city-school cooperation, (g) formation of a park foundation, (h) application for Community Development Block Grant monies, (i) fee increases and new fees for services, (j) acquisition of foundation grants, (k) community sponsorships, for example adopt-a-park or adopt-a-pool, (l) solicitation of gifts from the community through a gift catalog, and (m) hiring consultants to prepare grant requests (Tindell and Overstreet, 1990).

Cooperative agreements between the community recreation agency and the local school district are increasingly popular. Agreements typically include joint land acquisition, joint facility development, shared facilities and reciprocal use of facilities, and shared operating and maintenance costs.

A 1991 Office of Technology Assessment Report on Adolescent

Health recommended support for expanded recreational opportunities for youth. The report went on to urge the federal government to make seed monies or matching grants available to local recreation agencies to provide funding for the additional programming.

A recent piece of federal legislation has important implications for community recreation services. The Special Programs for Recreational Training Bill was included in the Housing and Community Development Act (1990). The legislation authorized the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide up to $125,000 per project in 50-50 match grants for recreation activities in low-income housing projects where severe drug abuse problems exist. Grant monies are available to public housing authorities and local agencies and may be used for the acquisition and renovation of parks, playgrounds and other recreational facilities; program development; staffing; and staff training. Public recreation agencies meeting the grant criteria are eligible to receive the funding.

Corporate sponsorships have been an important source of support for recreation programs. The Hershey Foods Corporation sponsors an annual track and field program for youth ages nine to fourteen years. The event involves participation at the local level, coordinated by the community recreation agency, with participants qualifying to advance to a national track and field event in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Some examples of other nationally sponsored programs include the Pepsi Cola Hot Shots basketball competition, Ken L. Ration dog shows, and McDonald

McModel model airplane competition. Locally sponsored events are extremely varied. Local involvement might include a photography shop's sponsorship of a photography competition or department store's sponsorship of a teen glamor workshop. Commercial recreation facilities frequently host public recreation activities, for example sailing instruction at a local marina or yacht club.

The National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources (Crompton, 1988), founded in 1977, is a nonprofit association which matches new, excess industrial products with the needs of nonprofit organizations, including park and recreation agencies. Members pay a fee to belong to the exchange. Products are available to members for the cost of shipping and handling. The association currently includes 500 very active donors and 2,500 less active donors. The catalog of products includes more than 8,000 different types of items, such as athletic equipment, clothing, office furniture and cleaning chemicals.

Agencies are reducing their costs by providing recreation services in non-traditional facilities. Alternative programming sites offer economy and provide for decentralization of services into the neighborhoods, closer to the participants. Examples of alternative sites include shopping malls, churches, libraries, schools, public housing projects, and abandoned public buildings.

Community recreation agencies are also contracting with private industry to provide services that have traditionally been

the responsibility of the local government. Every service that is currently provided by the community recreation agency can be provided by a private contractor. Frequently, the private sector can provide the services at a lesser cost than the municipality. Examples of commonly contracted recreation services include recreation facility construction and operation, programming, and grounds maintenance.

VI. YOUTH RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Youth Programming

Community recreation agencies operate facilities and provide programs of all types. They operate a broad scope of facilities including recreation centers, parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, hike and bike trails, ball fields, ball courts, tennis courts, golf courses, pools and other aquatic facilities, indoor and outdoor theatres, ice facilities, shooting ranges, zoos, environmental education centers, and equestrian centers. Programming is also diverse and includes social recreation, music, dance, drama, arts and crafts, sports and games, environmental activities and outdoor recreation. Activities may include special events or performances, tournament and league play, clubs, classes and workshops, and open or free play.

Successful youth recreation programs share a number of common characteristics. Good programs include a diverse offering of age-appropriate activities. Youth are fully involved and are responsible for planning and implementing projects. The programs are highly personalized and the participants perceive a sense of belonging to an intimate group. A strong sense of membership develops with numerous marks of identification. The rules and discipline are firm, yet flexible. Clear goals and rules of membership are established and communicated. There is a high level of trust among participants. The programs operate under the philosophy that youth are a resource to be developed, rather than a problem to be managed (Pittman, 1991; Heath & McLaughlin,

1990). The agency focuses on providing recreation service that attend to the emotional, social, educational and economic needs of the those who are participating. The activities result in a product--something that shows accomplishment for the effort and time invested. Successful programs are usually developed by a local initiative to serve the unique needs and to utilize the resources that are available in the community. The programs are allowed to evolve as the needs and interests of the participants change.

The good programs present positive alternatives for use of discretionary time and promote leisure skill and interest development. Communication with youth is most effective in flexible, informal environments that are less restrictive than a traditional classroom. Innovative programs have several commonalities. Exemplary programs are often initiated by a group of community leaders in response to a specific need. The programs have adequate financial backing. They involve a network of community agencies that work cooperatively to provide services. Potential partner organizations in the community include the local school district, youth serving agencies, foundations, adult service organizations, religious organizations and churches, professional organizations, county or state extension agents, vendors, and colleges and universities.

Evaluation of services is an ongoing process in most community recreation agencies. Programming is evaluated and adapted continuously in response to the changing needs and interests in the community. Assessment surveys are a mechanism

that is used to gather information from constituents about program interests, service needs and resources. Assessments may take the form of user surveys, community surveys, citizen advocacy committees, public hearings, or informal input. The assessment process is important to the agency in the planning and development of programs, services, and facilities. The evaluation also assists the agency in establishing accountability by documenting program output in relation to program objectives and agency goals.

Youth tend to stop attending organized recreation programs between the ages of 13 and 16 (Junger, 1991). There is a general feeling among adolescents that youth programs and centers are "too tame" and are "over organized" and are therefore unappealing because they are structured too much like school. Community recreation programs are generally accepted by those who accept the structure in school and achieve well in academics. Those youth who do not do well in school and reject school generally reject recreation programming as well (Hendry, 1985).

After-school care programs are offered by community recreation agencies across the country. The after-school programs provide an alternative to self-care by the youth. Typical programs include before school, after school, holiday, and summer day camp programs. Programs may be cooperative efforts between the community recreation agency and the school district. Normally programs are offered at the school site or at a recreation center site that is in the immediate vicinity of a

school. Fees are usually lower than private day care or, in some cases, are free. The programs typically offer supervision, organized recreational activities, tutoring or home-work assistance and nutrition programs.

L.A. BEST is an exemplary after-school program for elementary-school-aged children in low-income, high-risk neighborhoods in Los Angeles, California. The basic intent of the program is to provide a safe environment which fosters students' academic, physical, social and emotional growth. Program goals include the following:

- To provide a safe environment.
- To provide recreation activities.
- To provide enhanced educational opportunities and educational support.
- To provide education enrichment activities to supplement the regular education program.
- To provide interpersonal skills and self-esteem development.

The program is offered at 19 school sites, all of which are located in high crime areas, from 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm week days. The program includes 3,800 participants. Teens aged 16 to 19 serve as youth leaders. The after-school program includes recreation, education, nutrition, reading, homework assistance, tutoring, and computers. Program activities include field trips; ethnic and cultural awareness events; performing arts presentations and stage plays; guest lectures and instruction in science, music, and history; anti-gang and anti-drug education

and activities; and team and individual athletic competitions.

L.A. Best was planned and implemented by the Mayor of Los Angeles, the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified school district, and a council of leaders from the community.

An analysis of students' grades prior and subsequent to participation suggest that the L.A. Best program has had a positive impact on the children and youth. Overall grades were found to be significantly higher after program participation. More than 80% of the parents surveyed indicated positive changes in their child including:

- Improved ability to get along with others.
- Liking school.
- Increased self-confidence.
- Improved communication skills.
- Improved English language skills.
- Increased overall happiness.

L.A. BEST operates on an annual budget of $2.1 million; 75% of the funding is provided by the Mayor's Office and 25% is provided by the Kaiser Permanente Foundation. Other corporate sponsors, including SONY, Toshiba, and AT&T, provide in-kind services.

The City of Milwaukee Recreation Department (Junger, 1990) offers a comprehensive program of youth recreational services. Approximately 50% of the city's population is low-income and Black. The Milwaukee Recreation department provides before-school and after-school recreational programming at school sites throughout the city. After-school programming is offered

at 70 elementary and intermediate schools; 12 schools also offer before-school programming. Activities include organized recreation, tutoring, and computer activities. The program is supported through the city general fund, state grants, and corporate sponsorships. Fees are established by neighborhood. Programs in the low-income areas are reduced by as much as 50% as compared with sites in the more affluent areas of the city.

Summer day camps are also offered at the school sites. Camps are scheduled for eight hours each day throughout the summer. Sports, art, and computer camps are currently the most popular.

The department offers very few programs for youth ages 14 and 15. Those that are offered are highly structured. Low organized activities, such as dances, are not offered in an attempt to avoid problems with anti-social behavior by participants. Sports are the most popular activities in Milwaukee's Black community. Girls tend to participate in programs that are highly structured and are offered at a site that is close to home. Generally evening activities have not been well attended.

The City of Atlanta offers an after-school program that focuses primarily on sports. Recreation staff noted that youth quit coming to the recreation centers at about age thirteen. Co-ed sports leagues were organized to attract youth back into the centers. Other recreational and educational activities, including drug education, are offered in addition to sports.

The State of Kentucky recently passed legislation that provides recreation services at neighborhood activity centers, which will be located in public schools. Before-school,

after-school, holiday, and summer programming will be offered, free of charge, at every public school at which at least 20% or more of the children are eligible for the free lunch program. The legislation provides for recreation, education and social services at every activity center.

At-Risk Youth Programming

Programming for at-risk youth is a high priority among community recreation leaders. A three-day national forum addressing the issue of "Crime, Violence and Drugs in the Community: Can Recreation, Park, and Conservation Intervention Strategies Make a Difference?" was convened in Philadelphia in April of 1991. Forum delegates developed intervention strategies to alleviate the impact of adverse lifestyles and conditions on the quality of life, with particular emphasis on Black Americans.

Community recreation programs provide opportunities that would otherwise not be available to some youth. The community recreation agency has a responsibility to provide services to those who are not served by other agencies. At-risk youth are a group that may need additional services. The role of the community recreation agency with at-risk youth includes: (a) to provide public facilities and organized programs with leadership and materials; (b) to facilitate the work of other agencies that provide programs by acting as a consultant with expertise to assist with program development; (c) to prepare youth to initiate self-organized recreational activities; and (d) to provide outreach in a systematic way to encourage those who are excluded

from, unaware of, or unresponsive to community services.

Research in the area of community recreation services for at-risk youth has been very limited. Jones (1991) studied the effects of participation in a summer day camp program on youth living in two public housing projects in Charleston, West Virginia. The participants were between the ages of seven and thirteen. The camps were offered in housing projects in which 61% of the households had an annual income of less than $4,000, 97% of the families were eligible for the school free lunch program, and only 11% of the households were two-parent families.

The park and recreation department offered the camp program in cooperation with 12 other community agencies. The day camps were located on-site at the housing projects. Programming was scheduled for eight hours a day for two weeks and included organized recreation, education, and life skills activities. The results of the study have not been published; however, the researcher reported that the youth benefited from participation in the camp experience. Jones reported, for example, that self-esteem increased, physical self-image improved, and anxiety decreased after participation in the program. The youth indicated that they came to the camp to be with the teen mentors who worked as leaders and to participate in the recreation and sports activities. The day camp program will be offered at the Charleston housing projects again in 1991. A similar program is also planned for Willmington, West Virginia in 1991.

The National Recreation and Park Association is studying

community recreation programs that provide youth with recreation activities as positive alternatives. The purpose of the investigation is to develop a resource directory of exemplary programs to be shared with recreation programmers across the country. A basketball program in Glenarden, Maryland is one example of such programming. The midnight basketball league offers structured programming for youth ages 17 to 21 from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am three nights per week as an alternative to involvement in anti-social behaviors during high-risk hours. The program also involves mandatory attendance at drug addiction workshops and vocational counseling. In addition to keeping the players off the streets, the games have been successful in attracting large numbers of spectators (NRPA, 1990).

The provision of community recreation services is a good investment. Recreation services reduce the need for, and the costs of, providing other governmental and social services that deal with the management of delinquent behaviors after they occur. The City of Philadelphia currently spends an estimated $.26 per youth per day to provide recreational services. Incarceration of that same youth would cost the city $190 per day (Andy, 1991).

Dryfoos (1990) identified common components of successful prevention programs for at-risk youth. The two most critical components are (a) the presence of a responsible adult to provide individual attention to each participant's specific needs, and (b) a multi-agency collaborative approach to providing services.

Recreation is often the service that attracts youth to a

community center or multi-service center; it is the "threshold activity" that establishes initial contact with youth and provides opportunities to deliver other social services that may be of benefit to the youth. Social services that are frequently provided in addition to recreational programming include educational programs, vocational training and placement services, psychological counseling services, and drug and alcohol abuse programs.

At-risk youth may choose not to participate in organized community recreation programs for a number of reasons. They may not have the activity skills that are necessary for participation. Recreation staff generally lack training for working with at-risk youth. Staff have typically labeled at-risk youth as "trouble makers" and have failed to effectively reach out and encourage participation. The staff may often in fact discourage participation. As a result, recreation professionals have not realized their full potential as an intervention resource with at-risk youth.

City Streets (Daniels, 1991) is an exemplary youth recreation program in Phoenix, Arizona that provides recreation activities for low-income at-risk youth ages 12 to 19. Ninety percent of those being served, however, are ages 12 to 16. The program currently operates out of a recreation center as well as several mobile units. City Streets offers a wide array of recreational, educational, youth enrichment and community service activities. A youth council and a parent support group are highly involved with program planning. The program offers a broad spectrum of

organized activities including league and tournament sports, outdoor recreation, concerts, dances, special events, day trips and extended field trips, talent shows, and dances. The publicity and promotional efforts are unique and tailored to youth. For example, disc jockeys visit the schools during the lunch hour and play music and distribute program information to attract youth to participate. The recreational opportunities are frequently the activities that bring the youth into the program. Once involved, they become aware of other educational, enrichment, and community service opportunities that are also available through City Streets.

City Streets also functions as a problem prevention program. Mobile recreation units enable staff to identify a "hot spot" or potential problem situation in a neighborhood and then deliver recreational activities, on site, as an alternative to anti-social behaviors at the time and location of a potential problem situation.

The program is sponsored by the Phoenix Department of Parks and Recreation. Funding for a half-time teen counselor is provided by a local nonprofit organization.

Although most cities have had organized recreation programs for many years, it is only very recently that residents in small towns and rural areas have had access to similar services. A number of barriers are unique to rural recreation services. The rural community faces the challenges of (a) publicity of services, (b) geographic dispersion of potential participants and transportation, (c) small groups of people with diverse needs and

interest, (d) limited potential for generating revenue, thereby restricting the availability of capitol resources for facility construction, equipment, and dollars for operation, and (e) few qualified staff.

The Colorado Rural Recreation Development Program (CRRDP) (Long & Kieselbach, 1987) was initiated in 1987 and was designed to help rural Colorado communities establish low-cost recreation services. The program provides recreation opportunities in rural communities that have traditionally not had access to organized recreation services. The program provides rural communities with technical assistance, on-site leadership and leadership training. Currently 65 rural communities are involved with the project. Participating communities range in size from populations of 270 to 8,130 residents. The program is cooperatively sponsored by local, state, federal and corporate dollars. A large portion of the initial funding was provided by the Mountain Bell Foundation.

The success of the Colorado program resulted in the establishment of the Intermountain Rural Recreation Development Project (Long, 1989). The expanded project provides recreation services similar to those of the CRRDP in rural areas of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

Barriers to Participation

There are many barriers that impose limits on participation in recreation activities.

Information or knowledge barriers. Youth may not be aware of

facilities, programs, or transportation that is available to assist them in getting to the site to participate. Strategies to improve communications include targeted publicity and outreach efforts to inform the public of the services that are available. Word-of-mouth is the most effective means of publicity.

Social barriers. Barriers may involve inappropriate social skills for participation or a lack of acceptance by peers. Gender roles and expectations may also limit participation.

Skill development barriers. A youth may not have developed an adequate level of skill to participate with peers or their skills may exceed the level of instruction or competition offered within the recreation programs. Strategies to address skill barriers include providing diverse activities that challenge participants at varied levels of skill development from novice to advanced.

Location and Safety barriers. Participation may not be accessible because the facility is located too far from home or transportation may not be available to get to the site. Neighborhood crime and violence may impinge on the safety of participation. Safety may include the street traffic that the youth must negotiate to get to the site. Gangs also limit participation and service delivery. Strategies to overcome accessibility include satellite centers located in neighborhoods, close to the youth; scheduling after-school recreation activities at the school site, or scheduling activities to accommodate family participation at the recreation center.

Financial barriers. User and registration fees, and required

clothing, equipment or supplies may prevent low-income youth from participating in community based programs. Strategies to alleviate financial barriers include scholarships, differential pricing according to the neighborhood socio-economic status, work credit programs, or corporate sponsorships.

Language barriers. The language used in the publicity of programs or the language used at the facility may deny accessibility. Multi-lingual communication is essential in multi-lingual neighborhoods.

Cultural barriers. Programming that does not meet social and cultural needs of a group within a community impacts participation. An ethnic group may also find the cultural differences are so great that they can not assimilate into the community. Multi-cultural programming with planning involvement by the community may be essential to overcome cultural barriers.

Scheduling barriers. Scheduling may involve hours of operation of the facility, activity scheduling and scheduling for other youth services in the community. To facilitate accessibility recreation centers may be open evenings, weekends, and holidays. Activities may be scheduled to compliment other youth services and at times when public transportation is available or when transportation is convenient for parents.

Partner/team barriers. Participation in team or dual activities may be limited because the youth lacks a partner or team with whom to participate. Strategies to facilitate participation include drop-in, free-play programming at facilities which provide for pick-up games among informal groups.

Interest barriers. Programming that is not of interest limits participation among adolescents. Youth who have difficulty functioning in a highly organized environment will not participate in structured activities. Strategies to overcome interest barriers include involvement by youth in the program planning process.

Psychological barriers. A varied spectrum of fears may have an impact participation including: (a) bodily harm, (b) failure, (c) poor performance, (d) ridicule, (e) unfavorable comparison with peers, (f) loss of positive self-concept, (g) new experiences, and (h) risk-taking. The absence of achievement motivation is also a factor. Youth need achievement oriented role models.

Community barriers. The type, the number, and the maintenance of facilities, the equipment provided and the scope of programming offered determine the opportunities for participation in the community.

Fiscal barriers. Inadequate resources may limit the type and number of facilities and equipment provided and the scope of programming. Increasingly, creative financing is needed to enhance the community recreation agency's fiscal resources.

Staffing barriers. Fiscal resources may impact the number of staff hired and the qualifications of the staff. The public perception of staff qualifications may be a barrier to participation.

Exclusive participation barriers. Resident requirements for participation or increased cost for participation by nonresidents limits accessibility and participation.

VII. EQUITY ISSUES

Equity of Services

Foley and Herb (1991) indicated that equity of community recreation services will be a dominant issue in the 1990's. The authors defined the issue of equity as ". . . a concept concerned with perceived fairness of resource allocation patterns." (p. 56) Equity addresses the question of who gets what and who ought to get what.

Historically, recreation agencies have pursued equity based on the criterion that everyone should receive an equal amount of, or have equal access to, services and facilities. Many managers are questioning whether equal money and equal amounts of resources result in equity of services.

Cities across the country are attempting to provide equity of services. In FY 1988-1989, the City of Los Angeles invested $2.8 million to renovate 66 parks in inner-city neighborhoods. An additional $2 million was added to the "equity" program in FY 1989-1990. Equity of services may not yet have been attained, however. Additional monies are needed on an annual basis in the operating budget to provide programming and staffing in the renovated park areas and in recreation centers.

The National Urban Recreation Study (1989) concluded that recreation opportunities for urban youth are insufficient in most communities and the deficiencies are most evident in low-income, inner-city areas of large urban centers. The report indicated that:

> While recreation opportunities for most inner-city residents are insufficient, city agencies and community leaders usually identify the needs of disadvantaged youth as their most pressing concern. The needs of inner-city youth are intensified not only by residence in recreation-deficient neighborhoods, but by other social and economic disadvantages. In general, inner-city youth are members of low-income families, and thus more dependent on public recreation services; members of racial and ethnic minorities; less frequently exposed to a range of recreational opportunities, and therefore, possess fewer recreation skills.

The National Committee for Urban Recreation (Chase, 1979) assumed a firm stand on the position that recreation for urban residents--particularly disadvantaged, minority groups--is a necessity, not a frill. The committee further noted that despite an evident need for additional programming, many cities are reducing recreation services dramatically as a result of significant budget cutbacks. Staff positions have been frozen or eliminated, programming has been cut back, maintenance has been reduced, and as a result, leisure opportunities have been sharply curtailed. Therefore, at a time when there are substantial numbers of economically disadvantaged populations with critical needs for recreation, it has become increasingly

difficult for them to find adequate services.

A 1986 survey conducted by the United Community Services of 1,500 households in minority and disadvantaged neighborhoods of Metropolitan Detroit identified the following deficiencies in the community recreation services: (a) not enough recreational opportunities and facilities for youth, (b) insufficient opportunities for youth to participate in activities that encourage positive development, (c) inadequate number of organized group activities for youth, and (d) absence of cooperation among agencies responsible for providing youth services.

The findings of a study of community recreation services in major Eastern cities conducted in 1986 indicated that recreation services in white or integrated neighborhood offered more extensive organized programs and better maintenance of facilities than recreation services in minority areas (Kraus, 1987). Staffing levels at centers in minority areas were below those at centers serving predominantly white neighborhoods. The survey was narrow, however, the observations suggest that such practices are common.

Littell and Wynn (1989) compared recreational services in a low-income, inner-city area of Chicago with the services that were available in a more affluent suburban area of Chicago. The researchers found that the suburban area had a greater number of organizations providing recreation services than the inner-city area and that a greater diversity of activities was being provided by the agencies in the suburban area. The diversity of

activities offered in the inner-city was very limited by comparison. Suburban youth were found to be more likely to participate in activities outside of their community. Suburban youth and their parents were more aware of local organizations providing recreation, social, and elective educational programs than were inner-city youth and parents.

Budget reductions for community recreation services have had a greater impact on the low-income areas of cities than on the middle-class or upper-class neighborhoods. The more affluent population has greater discretionary funds which provide access to private recreation opportunities. Further, the more affluent citizens tend to have greater access to public officials and therefore are better able to obtain the support needed to fund recreation services in their neighborhood (Kraus 1987).

Many community recreation programs have instituted additional or new fees and charges for their services to offset reductions in their operating budgets. Recognizing that the fees have made it increasingly difficult for low-income youth to participate, agencies have implemented a number of alternative policies. Fees may be established at different levels at each recreation facility in a community based on the socio-economics of the surrounding neighborhood. Scholarship programs, funded by the agency or by outside sponsors, enable low-income youth to participate at no cost or at a reduced cost. Youth may be able to work at the recreation facility and receive money or work credits that may be used in place of fees.

Gender Issues

There is a void in the literature with regard to gender issues and youth recreation. Very little information was available from programmers to supplement the literature.

Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) contend that social expectations result in different recreation opportunities for boys and girls. Girls do not have equal opportunity and access to recreation services. The authors have identified a number of barriers to participation. The sexes perceive recreation differently because of socialization factors. As a society we have established a stereotyped set of masculine and feminine behaviors. Youth are motivated to adhere to those expected behaviors. Kelly (1987) indicated that while boys are encouraged to pursue activities that involve risk and exploration, girls are shielded from environments in which there may be risks. As a result, the activity choices that are available for girls are more limited than for boy. Perceived and actual personal safety is also an important factor limiting participation in recreational activities by girls. The City of Milwaukee has found that evening programming for girls is successful only if it is highly organized and offered at a facility that is located in the immediate neighborhood and close to home (Junger, 1991).

Deem (1986) identified several changes that are needed to remove the barriers to equal participation in recreation programs by boys and girls. A safe environment must be provided for participation. The girl and her parents must perceive that

the trip to the site and the facility is safe. Girls and women should be included in planning for recreation services. Female staff must act as role models for girls. Programming must consider the varied needs and interests of girls, prior experiences, and level of skill development. Programs must provide opportunities for skill development in a wide variety of activities as well as contribute to the development of a positive self-image.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

The role of the community recreation agency is changing rapidly. The way recreation services are delivered and the skills that are required to manage an agency are also changing. The professional preparation process continues to change dramatically to keep pace with the new demands. The formal education process can no longer be expected to prepare a professional for the duration of a career. Education has become an ongoing process, continuing throughout the professional's career. There is a trend away from training specialists who will quickly become obsolete toward preparing adaptable generalists (Carter and Witman, 1987; Dunn, 1986; Hogan and Berryman, 1988).

The recreation profession has implemented credentialing programs to assure competent practice and the delivery of quality services. Ninety-two university curricula in park, recreation, and leisure services are currently accredited by the Council on Accreditation. Programs are accredited for five years and are subject to annual reviews during the five year accreditation period. The present professional certification plan, implemented in 1990, requires initial testing and recertification every two years. Certified professionals (Certified Leisure Professional) are required to acquire a minimum of two units of professional development credit within the two year certification period in order to remain eligible for recertification.

Degree programs in recreation and leisure services do not

provide specific training for youth leadership. Those who work with youth programs have a general background in recreation and leisure services. Youth leadership programs that are offered in university curricula provide training in business management skills for the administration of youth serving organizations. Coleman, Rowland, and Robinson (1989) identified five key areas of understanding for recreation staff who work with youth: (a) cognitive, social, physical, and developmental characteristics of youth, (b) design and implementation of age-appropriate activities, (c) age-appropriate discipline practices, (d) before- and after-school school care needs, and (e) influences of peers and the media on the values and behaviors of youth.

The New York State Recreation and Park Society, with funding from the New York State Division for Youth, has developed an innovative training program for community recreation staff. The in-service training program was developed to prepare recreation center staff to deal effectively with at-risk youth who use their recreation facilities and participate in their programs. The seminars are designed to sensitize recreation professionals to the psychological, emotional, and social needs of at-risk youth. The training program provides effective leadership and interaction skills for dealing with at-risk youth. The training program also provides an overview of current issues and community agencies that serve the needs of at-risk youth. The expanded services that are provided by the community recreation agency as a result of the staff training are significant. The training program is available as a video taped presentation and is

currently being marketed to recreation agencies throughout the country (Ambuhl, 1991; Wallach & Grossman, 1990).

The Florida Recreation and Park Association sponsors a statewide drug prevention effort through grants from the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Governor's Office. The drug education program is designed to help recreation professionals interact more effectively with youth who are at-risk. Fifty-five park and recreation departments throughout Florida were chosen to implement a model drug prevention program at their recreation centers. The Drug Prevention Program, entitled Winning Recreation Alternative Program (WRAP), includes a two-day training session which provides information about drugs and chemical dependency, the problems of children of alcoholics, the referral process, drug use and legal considerations, warning signs of drug use, the intervention role of recreation professionals, adolescent suicide, and the development of life skills through recreation activities.

IX TRENDS AND ISSUES IN SERVICES

The public's expectations of community recreation services are changing rapidly. Programming continues to become increasingly broad in scope and more sophisticated as recreation agencies seek to respond to the community's diverse demands for service. In the past the community recreation agency has had primary responsibility for the provision of recreation services; however, the community agency cannot continue to serve the full spectrum of recreation need in the community. Programming must be enriched and diversified though cooperative efforts among youth-serving community organizations. Programs and services that are provided by the community recreation agency should compliment those provided by other organizations. The local government should continue to provide those facilities and services that other organizations are unable to provide and to serve those youth who are not served by other organizations. While the community recreation agency should continue to provide programs and operate facilities, in the future, the role of the agency must evolve into that of a facilitator and coordinator of all organizations in the community that provide recreation services. The community recreation agency should act to stimulate joint planning and coordination among organizations. The agency should act as a consultant with expertise in recreational services; in that role it will encourage, assist, advise, coordinate, publicize, evaluate, support and study recreation services in the community.

and other community organizations to provide quality child care that is accessible and affordable. Recreation programming must focus on providing opportunities for youth development, leisure awareness, and leadership development in alternative learning environments.

There is a loss of a sense of neighborhood in communities across the country. Society has become increasingly mobile. Families relocate with increased frequency. Most households in America move to a different neighborhood every five years. Families are "cocooning"; they are staying home with their VCR's and other electronic entertainment, ordering food delivered to their door and meeting many of their other needs within their own homes rather than in the community. Recreation agencies must design programs to bring the community together and strengthen neighborhood ties.

Community recreation agencies must develop intervention strategies to confront the problem of a diminishing sense of security that has developed as a result of the increasing rates of crime, violence, youth gangs, alcohol and drug abuse, and similar concerns that occur close to home. Recreation must be perceived as offering positive alternatives to anti-social behaviors and solutions to the problem. There is a need for documentation of the fact that the long-term costs of social pathology are always far more expensive than the relatively minor costs involved with providing recreation as a basic social and preventive service. Recreation programs are tools for youth

development. Competencies or outcomes of participation must be documented. There is a need for documentation of the values of recreation participation in adolescence in terms of enhanced career achievement in adulthood. The adequacy of existing recreation facilities and current programming must be evaluated and documented. Deficiencies in services must be addressed.

There is a growing disillusionment by the public with the efficiency, the effectiveness and the integrity of their local governments. Operations must be well managed in order to re-establish credibility with the public. The development of an accreditation program for community recreation agencies is in process. The purpose of the accreditation program is to assure that community recreation agencies meet minimum standards of service (Twardzik, 1991; Van der Smissen, 1991). Implementation of the accreditation program is scheduled for 1995.

It is anticipated that current municipal budget cutbacks are in fact long-term reductions of public funding for community services (Foley & Pirk, 1991; McCormick, 1991; Godbey, 1990; Tindell & Overstreet, 1990). Recreation services will continue to receive fewer general fund appropriations from the local government. Priority services must be identified and those must be delivered well. Efficiency of operation will become critical and costs must be controlled. Whenever possible, services will be provided on a self-sustaining basis. Alternative sources of funding will be tapped to their fullest potential. Corporate sponsorships, foundation grants, gifts, new cooperative relationships and volunteerism are important resources for

[illegible]ve enhancing strategies.

The public must be reeducated about the importance of community recreation services for youth. While there will be an estimated six million fewer teenagers by the year 2000 (Bannon, 1990), the need for youth services will continue to increase. The youth population will be increasingly diverse and proportionally more of them will live in poverty. In the absence of public education efforts, youth will receive proportionally fewer resources and attention as a service group. Historically, from the time of the Boston Sand Garden, community recreation services have responded to the needs of youth. There is a need to reaffirm the credentials of recreation professionals as providers of youth services. The challenge to the profession is to again be recognized as a leader in addressing the needs of youth.

Fewer young people are choosing recreation as a profession as a result of low salary potentials in the field and the political implications of working in municipal government. Strategic recruitment and mentoring programs must be designed and implemented. Recreation professionals must become advocates for public policy to enhance recreation services and must seek to strengthen local government support for community recreation services and recreation professionals. The quality of recreation staff must be strengthened. Professional preparation must include youth leadership training. There is a need to establish standard job requirements and salary increases for staff who work directly with youth.

Challenges in the delivery of community recreation services include the following:

Professional development. Park, recreation and leisure services curricula must include youth leadership training. Youth leadership must become a specialization within the field of recreation. Professional certification in leisure services must become a standardized minimum qualification for recreation services providers.

Equity of services. Standards for community recreation services must be developed. Implementation of a national community recreation accreditation program is necessary to assure that standards are being met and that there is equity in the distribution of facilities and the delivery of services within communities and between cities across the country.

Youth programming. Considerable public education and lobbying efforts will be required to maintain funding for youth services as the number of youth decreases in the coming years. There must be high quality child/youth care services in every community. The services must be accessible and affordable and provide programming during non-school time including before school, after school, school holidays and the summer break. Organized recreation must be a part of the program, staffed by Certified Leisure Professionals.

Finance. All projections indicate that the current cutbacks in public funding for community services are long term reductions. Recreation managers must aggressively seek to obtain a fair share of the ever-diminishing public funding dollars for

recreation services. Recreation must be perceived as an essential community service. A broad scope of alternative sources of monies must also be tapped as creative funding strategies become essential.

Leisure Awareness. Leisure awareness (leisure education) must become an integral part of the school curriculum at all levels. Leisure awareness must also become a part of all organized recreation programming.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This investigation indicated that there are a number of issues which warrant further study. Historically, support has been given to rural or wilderness-focused studies. Much less work has been done in the area of urban recreation with almost no funding provided for studies dealing with at-risk populations. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Not enough is known about recreation programming for youth.**

a. To be more effective, we must understand how youth learn about community recreation programs. An investigation of the relationship between parental awareness of recreation services and participation by youth is also needed.

b. Further study should examine why youth choose to participate in a particular activity; whether participation in specific recreation activities is a reflection of differences in individual preference or a reflection of other factors such as peer preferences, the availability of community recreation services or the availability of discretionary income.

c. Little is known about participation patterns in terms of frequency and duration of involvement.

d. There is a need for more extensive evaluation and documentation of outcomes of participation in organized recreation programs. Specific areas of study could include the long-term effects of participation in organized recreation activities on self-esteem, development of social skills,

involvement in crime and delinquency, and educational and vocational achievement.

e. There is a need for further examination of the perceived values of services by youth and by parents.

f. There is very little in the literature about community recreation services for at-risk youth.

g. There is a need for evaluation of the values of participation in organized community recreation as compared with the values of involvement in other youth services.

2. Documentation of the numbers of youth served in organized community recreation programs in needed.

a. The numbers of youth participating in organized community recreation progams should be documented. There is also a need to document the numbers of young adolescents who are not being served by community recreation programs.

3. Recreation participation among minorities is an area of study that has only recently received attention.

a. There is a need to investigate the differences in recreation particiaption and attitudes among different racial and ethnic populations, with an effort to keep socioeconomic status constant in order to determine the influence of cultural tradition or indigenous lifestyles, rather than the effects of social class and economic constraints.

b. Further study would enhance our understanding of the cultural assumptions about the use of free time and participation in various recreation activities.

c. Identification of the commonalities in recreation

activities that cross racial and ethnic groups and the social issues implicit in planning activities for increasingly diverse populations would be value.

4. There is a need for documentation in the area of professional staffing.

a. Further examination is needed to identify essential qualifications and skills of recreation staff who work with youth and at-risk youth.

b. Examination of effective instructional techniques and leadership approaches for working with youth is essential to increase the effectiveness of services.

c. There is a need to evaluate the equity of salaries for staff who work with youth programs.

5. Finance is an area that warrants further inquiry.

a. The amount of monies spent by community recreation agencies for youth programming nationally should be documented.

b. Documentation is needed of the cost effectiveness of providing basic social and preventative services, such as recreation programs, as compared with the cost of dealing with social problems that result if the basic services are not provided.

c. Further analysis is needed of the proportion of the general fund that is allocated to youth programs and of recent trends in allocation of such funds.

6. There is a need for further investigation of equity in the provision of community recreation services.

a. There is an urgent need to investigate the adequacy of

facilities and services that are provided in the community and to research and document the equity of recreation facilities and services among neighborhoods and between cities.

b. Examination of the policies that determine the allocation of recreation resources among neighborhoods within a community is also important.

c. There is a need to investigate the disparity in funding between low-income and higher-income communities/neighborhoods.

7. **Little is known about gender differences in community recreation.**

a. There is a need to investigate gender differences in recreation opportunities, preferences, utilization of services, and content of programming for youth.

b. Exploration of gender differences in recreation participation by youth and the social factors that influence youth would be of value to practitioners at all levels--administrators, program planners, and recreation leaders.

8. **There is a need to explore ways to deliver recreation services in urban areas more efficiently.**

a. There is a need to identify effective ways of delivering recreation services in neighborhoods that are affected by gangs, crime, welfare dependancy and other social problems.

b. The linkage of public recreation with other social services, and the coordination of all urban social and recreation agencies should be explored and documented.

XI. PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Public policy in parks and recreation has primarily addressed land use, natural resource management and environmental issues (Kraus, 1990; PCAO, 1986). To stimulate change in community recreation services, recreation professionals will have to enter the political arena--an arena that they have avoided in the absence of powerful issues and a strong constituency to promote public policy. This investigation indicated that there are a number of issues which warrant immediate action. Therefore, the following recommendations for public policy are made:

1. Financial Support. Federal support must be provided for the expansion of appropriate recreation services in the community through seed monies or matching grants to local recreation agencies (OTA, 1991). Funding to support recreation services must also become a priority at the local government level. General Fund monies must be appropriated to provide needed facilities, programming, and staffing. Public officials must be educated about the values of recreation. They must be made aware of the fact that recreation is a good investment. Providing recreation services reduces the need for, and the costs of, providing other governmental and social services which deal with the management of negative behaviors after they occur. A more adequate level of capital funding for acquiring, developing, and rehabilitating public recreation resources and facilities is imperative to assure that existing resources are protected and future recreation spaces are reserved now while they are still available.

a. Recreation Facilities and Programming. Funding must be provided to keep recreation facilities open and available for use a maximum number of hours including evenings/nights, weekends and holidays. Programming must include activities that meet the diverse needs and interests of the community and provide for a balance of structured and drop-in activities.

b. Improved Financial Access to Recreation Services (OTA, 1991). In the future municipal budget cutbacks will make it increasingly necessary for recreation agencies to depend more heavily on user fees and charges to finance services. Agencies will be forced to develop programming that is self-supporting, or nearly self-supporting. The local government must subsidize services to those who are economically disadvantaged and unable to afford to pay for services in order to assure increased financial access to recreation services.

2. Reduced Fragmentation in the Delivery of Recreation and Related Services (OTA, 1991; PCAO, 1986). The demand for recreation services will continue to increase at the local level. More effective interagency and intergovernmental cooperation is essential to enhance public and private recreation opportunities and should be pursued at all levels. It will become essential for community recreation agencies to assume increased responsibility for the promotion of community-wide recreation service delivery systems and to encourage joint planning and coordination among all community agencies that provide recreation services.

a. Regional Planning Systems. As the demand for services

increases, and given curtailed funding realities, it is becoming increasingly necessary to coordinate the full spectrum of organizations that deliver recreation services in the community and the region, and to bring these separate units together into a cohesive regional planning system. Only through this type of a cooperative planning can maximum efficiency in the delivery of services be attained and an adequate level of recreation opportunities be provided for the entire population, particularly in large urban areas.

b. County and State Government Cooperation. County and state governments must be encouraged to develop recreation facilities in the proximity of urban areas which will augment local government facilities. County and state facilities typically include regional and state parks, beaches, recreation centers, golf courses, nature centers, outdoor recreation centers, and cultural centers.

c. Cooperative Agreements. Community recreation agencies must pursue cooperative agreements with other public services and the private sector. The additional facilities will enable agencies to provide programming in facilities that are located throughout the community including schools, libraries, public housing projects, shopping malls and churches. Alternative programming sites offer economy and provide for decentralization of services into the neighborhoods, closer to the participants.

3. Support Federal Data Collection and Research (OTA, 1991). Present research and technical communication processes are inadequate. Clearinghouse functions, including data collection

and dissemination management, technology sharing, and research are critical to more efficient public services.

a. Symposia. Support for data collection and research could include sponsorship of a national symposium or symposia on issues in community recreation services for adolescents.

b. National Reporting. There must be encouragement for appropriate federal agencies to provide congress and the public with periodic (biannual) reports on the status of adolescent recreation services.

c. National Data Bank. Given the current void of data, there must be support and encouragement for local efforts to collect community recreation service information that will at least in part be comparable with a national data bank of statistics on adolescent community recreation services.

4. Leisure Awareness. Education for the constructive use of leisure must become an integral part of the school curriculum at all levels. Efforts to inform school officials about the importance of including education for the use of leisure in the school curriculum will be required. Leisure awareness must also become a part of all organized recreation programming.

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